

# SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

MARCH 1938

PARILIA NUMBER

VOL. 4, No. 8



## The Sixth Parilia

By ANNE DODGE BAILHACHE

THE sixth annual Parilia has now been recorded in the San Francisco Art Association's Book of History and on a page of brilliance and beauty. Yearly, these Parilias present to the members of the Association, and to the public, a display of those peculiar qualities of color, form and glamorous incident which are the special attributes of artists.

Each year, for one brief night, artists (these dreamers of dreams) lay aside their own abstract and complex problems and consent to dramatization, identifying themselves with a gorgeous theme of pageantry. Yes, for one night they reveal themselves collectively to the world; and with the candor which is an essential part of

their attitude toward all things. The result is the Parilia! Good, bad, or indifferent, it stands for something essential in our community.

We feel comparisons to be futile and will not indulge in them. It may be stated, however, that year by year, in these recreations of the forms and colors of past ages of man, new and vital lessons are learned.

As with any group, action breeds reaction and so when artists meet again as artists and not as ancient Greeks or Polynesians they swear they'll never "do" another Parilia. But again from reaction, actions form. Committees meet and grievances are aired; mistakes are analyzed and enthusiasms sprout and when once more Parilia



time comes around, brushes daub fresh muslin, "dime stores" put on extra help and everyone is in the thick of preparations.

This year's pageant presented problems which were new and difficult; that involved a complete reconstruction in technical planning and a general scaling down of former vast proportions in both pageant and attendance. This was necessary because of change of venue from the Auditorium to the comparatively limited space of the Palace Hotel, where it was felt that factors leading to the adverse criticism of former Parilias could be eliminated or corrected. The nimble genius of Lucien Labaudt, ably supported by Jeannette and Eldridge Spencer, evolved the revised technical plans and general theme. Mr. Labaudt visualized the decorative plan and color schemes. He covered the walls of the Concert Room, Rose Bowl and Palm Court of the hotel with decorations so brilliant and beautiful one regretted the transitory nature of their being. Mrs. Spencer integrated the lighting effects and music into the actual structure of the pageant. Ray Ingram assembled the divers parts of the pageant into practical working form. Ansel Adams wrote and directed the effective percussion music and Paul Ralston conceived the Grecian Chorus.

And so, for the brief session of a night (and early morning) Gods and Goddesses, and mortal men and maidens of ancient Crete, assembled to fete in dance and sport the court of Minos, King of Knossus, son of Zeus. Also, from the corridors of the past, came the Minotaur, half man, half bull, terrible, demanding sacrifices. Legendary warriors, among them Theseus, citizen of Athens, came to battle with the monster, to destroy, or be in turn destroyed. Only after bloody battle did Theseus gain the victory and fair Ariadne, daughter of the King. So ran the tale and so the theme on which the sixth Parilia pageant was so well designed.

Inadequate space prohibits full description of the splendor of the procession through the several rooms, the drama of the percussion music and the distinction of the individual pageant groups. Suffice it to say, however, that it was beautiful.

The San Francisco Art Association owes a special gratitude to the many groups outside its own membership who contributed so generously to the success of the whole. These groups included the Rudolph Schaeffer School of Design, the "Ark" Association, the San Francisco Society of Women Artists, the Lyons-Peyster Dancers, the Delta Epsilon Group, the East Bay Artists, the San Francisco Architectural Club, the Bernice van Gelder Dance Group, the California School of Fine Arts, the Alumni Association and

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## Today and Art

By PHILIP PINNER

THE beauty of primitive art lies in its necessary suitability to purpose, and in the rhythmic quality characteristic of the life of primitive peoples we find their true expressions. Gauguin remarked his surprise when a Polynesian told him he was "useful to others", that an artist was a "useful" human being. This we feel is a concept of art, to which living artists should subscribe.

Our weakness has been in a romantic dilettantism which has led to people considering art a luxury. (Luxuries are usually neglected for necessities). This idea should be removed, removed by educating people to realize their unconscious necessities. It is time that the artist drop pose and pseudo-profundity and with genuine depth accept reality. We should maintain a free and open attitude toward the present, and flexible minds toward the future.

The professional, in all fields, has produced most of the things and ideas that are useful to others. In the finest and broadest sense this professional is a serious person of high intent, competent and confident, who works honestly and intelligently and who is not continually fretting about being clever, original, or expressing himself. In art he is the one who comprehends the fundamentals of his work, knows the limitations of his tools and materials, and is able to conceive and express within these limitations because of fundamental knowledge. The professional understands style, style as opposed to mannerism, and is therefore unafraid of regimentation for he can surmount limits by creating within them.

Today we unquestionably live more complex lives than primitive peoples. This is especially true concerning our food, shelter, and communications. In place of rhythm there seems apparent chaos. It is the artist's business to bring order, to resolve seeming discords into a counterpoint. That he may do this, the artist must realize and accept ideas which form a live esthetic; stagnant affectations must be repudiated. The artist of today must be useful and must stand the test today will give him.

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### The Sixth Parilia

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the George Pring School of the Dance. The group of the San Francisco Art Association represented King Minos' court with Ray Boynton as the king and Kathleen Boynton as queen.

The riot of color, the hilarity and good feeling made this Parilia everything an artists' ball should be, and a unique event in San Francisco's yearly calendar.





BOULEVARD STOP, Gouache by Doris Miller Johnson.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Taylor are holding one-man shows during March, April and May at the San Francisco Art Association Gallery at the Museum. In the following statements they have been kind enough to give expression to their own approach to their work. We hope that these articles will add to the appreciation of the paintings they will show.

### Farwell Taylor

**A**N ARTIST'S views of art are difficult to express since they are constantly enlarging, ever changing to fit his own development.

I believe an artist should have a complete knowledge of his craft and the tools and materials with which to work. This is just as necessary for him as it is for the doctor, the lawyer, the architect, or the bricklayer.

However, once the artist has all these technical handles his troubles have only begun.

What he is capable of expressing depends entirely upon the individual artist, his heredity and environment.

What the artist is, what he thinks and what he feels is placed on his canvas or sculpted in his clay. Nothing he can write or say will be as clear as the message he delivers through the medium of his work.

Therefore, let the artist's work speak for itself. If the work has nothing to say, the fault usually lies with the artist and not with the observer.

### Doris Miller Johnson

**T**O SPEAK a language well one must think in that language. The fluent speaker is the one who has learned to think in a new language without first translating ideas which have registered upon his brain in the words of his native tongue. So, in painting, the one who gives the fullest expression is the artist who has learned to think subconsciously in terms of space, form, line, movement, and color.

Much of the motivating force in art is bound to be subconscious. The artist trains himself to think in terms of abstract qualities or aesthetic values. To give expression to a personal approach to art is difficult because to do so the artist must reverse his process and analyze that which he has already completed.

My greatest stimulation in art is painting out-of-doors and finishing the work while on the locale. The presence of the subject-matter, be it buildings, trees, streets, hills, or a combination of all, suggests even more to me than really exists. The relation of mass-forms, color, line, and texture excites new interpretations not easily conceived when away from the subject. The day and the scene provoke different moods of expression.



## San Francisco Art Association Bulletin

*Published Monthly by The San Francisco Art Association*  
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### In Memoriam

As we go to press we receive the sad news of the death of Edgar Walter. For many years a member of the Association, he served it as artist, teacher and director. As a sculptor of national reputation his services were ever in demand. His recently completed works on the Department of Justice Building in Washington, D. C., were outstanding. Through his brilliant career his interest in the Art Association never lagged, and in his passing we have suffered an irreparable loss.

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### N. Y. Architectural League Annual

In making its annual exhibition national in scope, the New York Architectural League has allotted its available wall space among the principal cities of the country. San Francisco has been given wall space of approximately 120 square feet, thus obviously limiting the number of local examples that can be shown. Artists are, however, invited to submit work, and a local committee headed by Timothy Pflueger will select and arrange an exhibition for the designated space. A circular giving detailed information may be had at the S. F. Museum of Art. Material must be at the Museum by March 21 for final selection.

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### Chicago Watercolor Show

The San Francisco Museum of Art has kindly consented to act as a collecting agency for the artists of the Association who wish to submit to the 17th International Exhibition of Watercolors at the Art Institute of Chicago to be held between April 28 and May 30. As usual, artists submitting will be charged a nominal fee for packing and handling, as well as transportation charges. Entry blanks are available at the Museum and must be returned to the Art Institute by March 15. Paintings for the exhibition will be collected at the Museum Monday and Tuesday, March 14 and 15, from one till six p. m.

## Parilia Problems

IT WAS a beautiful Parilia—not as sumptuous as the first Roman Ball, nor as magnificent as the Pre-Columbian and Cambodian Balls; neither did it possess that peculiar fantastic fusion of movement and color that was so well achieved at the re-creation of Barbaric Oceania. But it was a friendly, happy event and one that has made its contribution to the prestige of this annual institution of the San Francisco Art Association.

It was pleasant to feel that one was among friends and quite a new experience at a Parilia to be able to find them so easily; and the charm of good music, excellent management and authentic decorations made this ball of ancient Crete a very lovely one. We must specially mention Lucien Labaudt's friezes, so beautifully designed that it seemed unfortunate they could not be preserved. Many permanent murals surrounding us these days are far less worthy of preservation.

But even Labaudt's imagination and ability could not transform San Francisco's Palace Hotel into anything else than what it prides itself in being. Though our Cretan Ball was a refreshing interlude, those of us who love the Parilia as a spectacle that only an artist group can produce missed the stage, the massed pageantry and the spirit of unreality that pervaded other balls—qualities that necessitate the use of a single auditorium.

We are indeed faced with a problem in presenting this yearly Parilia. We would have it gay, yet friendly. We would like to invite all who enjoy its color and fantastic beauty, yet exclude those who would abuse the hospitality of its creators.

Besides the artistic integrity the Art Association is determined to maintain, the purpose of the ball can scarcely be lost sight of. The maintenance fund of the San Francisco Museum of Art, which receives part of the proceeds, and the Parilia Purchase Prizes awarded at all Annuals of the Art Association, depend entirely upon it and are too important to be discarded in our calculations. The public's response to the Museum program has established its necessity beyond question and the stimulation of prizes to artists is obvious. Unfortunately, the scope of this year's Parilia prohibited its net proceeds being commensurate with those of other years.

Just how to achieve the miracle of artistic and financial success—of a Parilia large in size and friendly in spirit—requires resourcefulness and wisdom beyond our own limitations. "Do you then be reasonable," said old Socrates to Crito. Maybe reason dictates that we cannot gather roses stripped of thorns!

—M. R.



## Art School Teaching

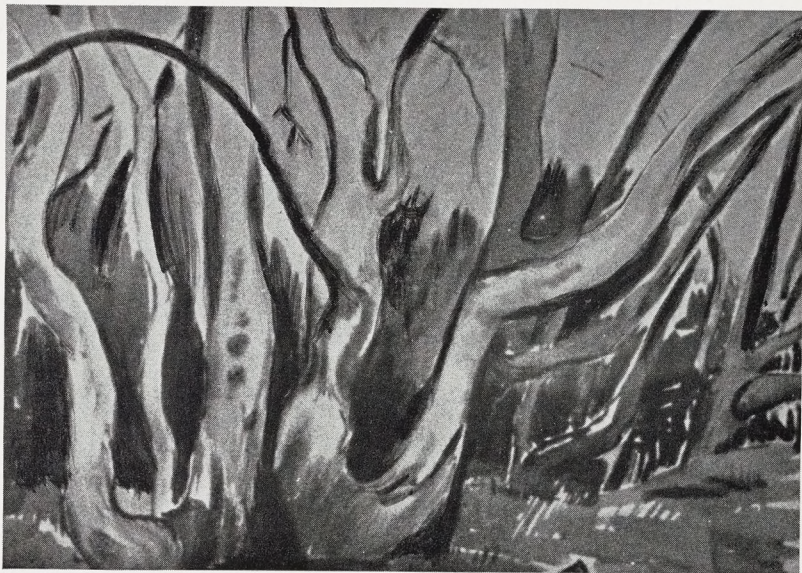
By BERNARD ZAKHEIM

THE western conception of proportion and of technique as a means to an end are the two salient points of teaching in our art schools. These principles which contain the inherent logic of the American people are hindering expression and creativeness.

The term "proportion" is commonly attributed to anatomy, and here it sadly remains as though there were no other proportions in existence. Architecture or other functional proportions are forgotten.

For example, when the Aztec Indian began a piece of sculpture he wanted it to serve a purpose, as the base of a pilaster or the leg or top of a sacrificial table. He wanted to relate his sculpture to the rituals of the temple. Let us say that he therefore divided his stone in three, with the upper third forming a head-gear with the symbols of the harvest or of sun-worship on it, the middle third a face, and the last third a torso and legs. The modern audience in viewing this piece of sculpture receives the full impact of good art and understands it as such. But when this same audience approaches the problem of the art school, it loses judgment and directness, and approves years of work for a dead anatomical proportion.

Much the same thing happens with technique when the early years of an artist's training are devoted to it. Too often, instead of helping expression, technique becomes a limitation to creativeness. When the United States was still expanding, technique as an end in itself was justifiable inasmuch as abundance was a necessity and technique aided in the realization of this abundant state. For this generation, however, the problems of abundance have been solved and it is no longer necessary to concentrate upon means of attaining it. Let us therefore de-emphasize technique for function, and strive for substance and quality. This could be achieved by giving the art student problems to solve, rather than by the empty searching for abstract qualities. True technique and proportion will then come to the vigilant student indirectly.



TREES. Watercolor by Farwell Taylor.

### School for Critics

By VICTOR ARNAUTOFF

Phyllis de Lappe continues to be the local Hogarth, and a very effective one.

—Alfred Frankenstein.

THE artists who read the reviews and criticism of local shows in our newspapers will agree with me that light and too often incorrect statements are made. The statement quoted above will serve me, I believe, as an example to prove my case. As often as I read statements like this I question their cause. For whom are they written, for artists, for art lovers, or for the public?

If written for artists it is naive to believe that it could be taken seriously. Artists know Phyllis de Lappe and her art and have a much better understanding of her work than this kind of criticism can explain.

If written for the public—well, does the public know Hogarth's art? It must, or it could not be able to draw the parallel, suggested by the best of our local critics, between the dead English and living American artist. Personally, I question the public's knowledge of Hogarth.

Could it possibly be that this statement is written for the critic himself? If so, why publish it? Adequate for a personal note-book memo it most certainly is insufficient for an art review. Who cares under what labels talents come to rest in a critic's note-book or brain-box?

I cannot understand why all of our critics evade the difficulties involved in the analysis of works of art by attaching labels to them which

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## Current Exhibitions in Local Galleries

*Amberg-Hirth*, 165 Post Street. During March, Bowls and other Functional Articles for the Home done in Wood, by G. Zurek.

*Art Center*, Mercedes Building, 251 Post Street. March 7-21, Pastels, by John Mottram. March 23-April 13, Gouaches, by George Harris.

*Bay Region Art Association*, Gallery, Fifth Floor, Capwell, Sullivan and Furth Building, Oakland. Open daily, except Sundays and holidays. Opening March 16 and extending through April 16, The Fourth Annual Exhibition of Graphic Arts, by members of the Bay Region Art Association. Continuing through March 14, Group Showing of Members' Work.

*California Palace of the Legion of Honor*, Lincoln Park. Through March 15, Impressions of Iceland, paintings by Emilie Walters. Through March 20, Paintings by Artists West of the Mississippi. Throughout March, European Porcelain, from the collection of Mrs. A. B. Spreckels. Opening March 24, Forty-eighth Annual American Painting Exhibition, assembled by The Art Institute of Chicago.

*California School of Fine Arts*, 800 Chestnut Street. Opening March 18 and continuing through March 26, Exhibition of Water Colors, by students of the school.

*City of Paris*, corner Geary and Stockton Streets. In the Gallery, February 28-March 19, Exhibiting Art Directors Club of New York City. March 14-19, Etchings and Water Colors, by Florence Terry. March 21-26, Water Colors, by Maria von Ridenstein.

*Courvoisier Galleries*, 133 Geary Street. Through March, American Water Color Artists.

*De Young Memorial Museum*, Golden Gate Park. March 1-15, Chinese Wood-Block Prints. During March, Japanese Prints, from the Museum's collection. During March, Original Drawings for Cartoons in Puck. Throughout the month, Books, available to visitors of the Art Reference Library of the De Young Memorial Museum, will be on exhibition.

*Duncan, Vail and Company*, 116 Kearny Street. March 2-16, Water Colors, by A. Snelitzer. March 16-30, Temperas, by L. Stratton.

*Gump Galleries*, 246 Post Street. Opening March 7 and continuing for three weeks, Paintings by Stan Poray.

Opening March 28, Paintings and Drawings, by Eugen Neuhaus.

*Oakland Art Gallery*, Civic Auditorium, Oakland. March 6-April 3, Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings.

*Paul Elder Gallery*, 239 Post Street, February 28-March 19, Water Colors, by Angelina Minutoli. March 21-April 9, Sketches of Modern Masters.

*San Francisco Museum of Art*, War Memorial, Civic Center. Through March 14, Coptic, Greek Island, Indian, Persian and European Textiles from the 4th Century to the 18th, from the Crocker collection. Through March 7, Paintings by Maurice de Vlaminck. Through March 15, Master Drawings, from the Crocker collection. March 6 through March 18, Paintings by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Prints by Ernst Barlach. March 22 through May 2, Fifty-eighth Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association—Oils, Tempera on Panel, Sculpture. Through May 1, Dance Photographs and Drawings.

## Leon Kroll at Mills

Mills College is proud to announce the presence of Leon Kroll as head of its Art Department for the Summer Session of 1938. The presence of Mr. Kroll will continue the Mills College Art Department's tradition of securing the services of leading artists in the field of painting for its summer art courses.

## School for Critics

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say little or nothing of the complex relationship between art and the artist and the life of today. If we must compare a work of art to anything, why not compare it to the life which inspired it? Why not question what forced or inspired the artist to create? I challenge our critics to answer these questions.